

The claims are re-printed below for the examiner's convenience:

1. - 36. (Canceled).

37. (Previously presented) A protector for protecting an elongated portion of a rope or webbing, said protector including a protector length and said elongated portion of the rope or webbing including a protected length that is substantially the same as the protector length, said protector comprising a flexible single layer of abrasion resistant material formed to have memory in a spiral shape, said protector memory producing a small constricting force that provides a snug fit around the rope or webbing along the full length of the protector with sufficient gripping force as to inhibit slippage along the length of the rope or webbing when no external force is applied to the protector, and to resist being unwrapped when slid sideways along a rough, hard surface in a direction transverse to the length of the spiral; said protector, in use, having a plurality of overlapping wraps around said rope or webbing such that when expanded over the rope or webbing there will still exist sufficient overlap of the spiral to completely envelope and protect the rope or webbing from abrasion damage when a force greater than the constricting force caused by sliding actions opens an edge of an outer overlapping wrap.

38. (Previously presented) The protector as claimed in claim 37, wherein said protector permits the rope or webbing to move relative the protector along the length of the rope or webbing when the protector is pressed against a frictional surface.

39. (Previously presented) The protector as claimed in claim 37, wherein said protector is formed of a heat settable material.

40. (Previously presented) The protector as claimed in claim 37, wherein said protector has an inner diameter of at least about 0.8 cm.
41. (Previously presented) The protector as claimed in claim 37, wherein said protector has an inner diameter of no more than about 2.5 cm.
42. (Previously presented) The protector as claimed in claim 37, wherein said protector includes a sufficient width of flexible material that it wraps around itself at least one and one half times.
43. (Previously presented) The protector as claimed in claim 37, wherein said protector is formed into a circular spiral shape.
44. (Previously presented) The protector as claimed in claim 37, wherein said protector is formed into a triangular spiral shape.
45. (Previously presented) The protector as claimed in claim 37, wherein said protector is formed into a square spiral shape.
46. (Previously presented) The protector as claimed in claim 37, wherein said protector weighs less than about 2.5 ounces.
47. (Previously presented) The protector as claimed in claim 37, wherein said protector is formed of a urethane having a thickness of about 0.1 cm to about 0.2 cm.
48. (Previously presented) The protector as claimed in claim 37, wherein said protector is formed of a urethane having a width of about 5 cm to about 20 cm.

49. (Previously presented) The protector as claimed in claim 37, wherein said protector is formed of a urethane having a length of about 35 cm to about 80 cm.

50. (Previously presented) A protector for protecting an elongated portion of a rope or webbing, said protector including a protector length and said elongated portion of the rope or webbing including a protected length that is substantially the same as the protector length, said protector comprising a flexible single layer of abrasion resistant material formed to have memory in a spiral shape, said protector memory producing a small constricting force that provides a snug fit around the rope or webbing along the full length of the protector with sufficient gripping force as to inhibit slippage along the length of the rope or webbing when no external force is applied to the protector yet permit slippage along a length of the rope or webbing when a sufficient external force is applied to the protector, and to resist being unwrapped when slid sideways along a rough, hard surface in a direction transverse to the length of the spiral; said protector, in use, having a plurality of overlapping wraps around said rope or webbing such that when expanded over the rope or webbing there will still exist sufficient overlap of the spiral to completely envelope and protect the rope or webbing from abrasion damage when a force greater than the constricting force caused by sliding actions opens an edge of an outer overlapping wrap.

51. (Previously presented) The protector as claimed in claim 50, wherein said protector is formed into a circular spiral shape.

52. (Previously presented) A method of protecting a protected length of a rope or protector, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a flexible single layer of abrasion resistant material formed to have memory in a spiral shape and having a protector length that is substantially the same as the protected length of the rope or webbing;

constricting said protector around the rope or webbing with a small constricting force applied by the spiral shape to achieve a snug fit around the rope or webbing along the full length of the protector with sufficient gripping force as to inhibit slippage along the length of the rope or webbing when no external force is applied to the protector;

resisting the protector from being unwrapped when slid sideways along a rough, hard surface in a direction transverse to the length of the spiral by the constricting force; and

permitting an inner spiral portion of the protector to be exposed when a force greater than the constricting force is applied in the direction transverse to the length of the spiral due to the protector including a plurality of overlapping wraps around the rope or webbing such that when expanded over the rope or webbing there will still exist sufficient overlap of the spiral to completely envelope and protect the rope or webbing from abrasion damage when the force greater than the constricting force causes an edge of an outer overlapping wrap to be opened.

53. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 52, wherein said method further includes the step of permitting slippage along a length of the rope or webbing when a sufficient external force is applied to the protector.